

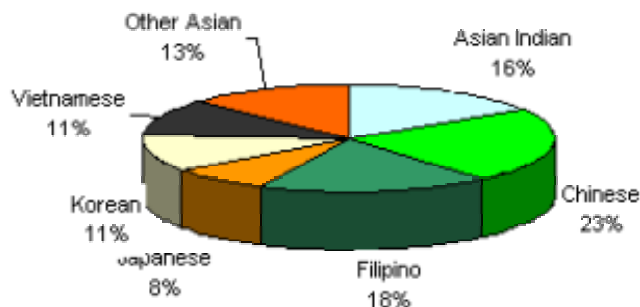
Executive Summary - Asians and Pacific Islanders in America: A Demographic Profile

Although Asians and Pacific Islanders represent one of the smallest minority populations in the United States, they have consistently been one of the fastest growing. Since 1960, the U.S. Asian and Pacific Islander (API) population has grown from about one million to over 12 million. With a 48 percent population increase in the past decade, the growth of the API population was exceeded only by the Hispanic population, which grew 58 percent during the same time period. Today, the Asian American population constitutes 4.2 percent of the total U.S. population, up from 2.9 percent in 1990 and 1.5 percent in 1980.

Census 2000 Population Findings

- The 2000 Census for the first time gave respondents the option of choosing "one or more races." The results show that 10.2 million U.S. residents considered themselves Asian, and a total of 11.9 million considered themselves Asian *or* Asian in combination with another race. An additional 1.2 million U.S. residents reported that they were Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander alone or in combination with another race.
- The U.S. Asian/Pacific Islander population includes many groups that differ in language, culture, and length of time they have been in the U.S. Some of the Asian groups, such as the Chinese and Japanese, have been here for several generations. Others, such as the Hmong, Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians, immigrated to the U.S. comparatively recently. Since Hawaiians are natives of the U.S., relatively few Pacific Islanders are foreign-born.

Asian Subgroups, Census 2000



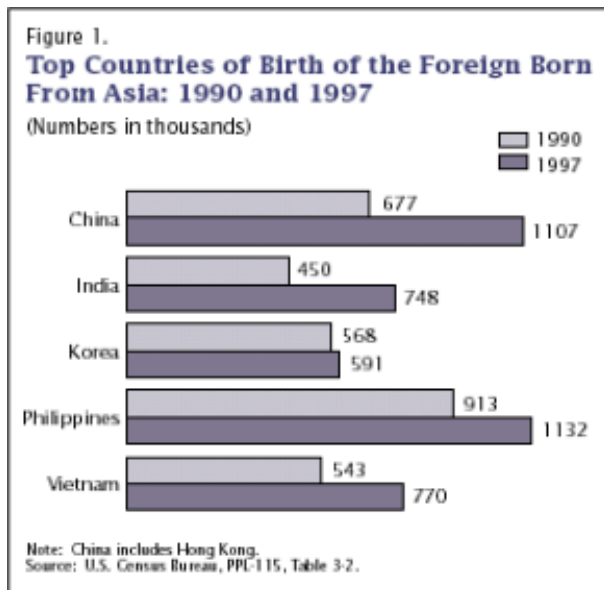
- According to Census 2000 results, the most numerous Asian subgroup continues to be Chinese Americans with 2.4 million persons. Asian Indians are one of the fastest growing Asian American subgroups, rising 106 percent from 1990 to 1.7 million persons in 2000. Vietnamese Americans also increased sharply, going up 83 percent to 1.1 million.

Foreign-Born Asian Population

- A total of 28.4 million foreign-born persons resided in the United States in 2000. Of those, 26 percent, or 7.2 million, were born in Asia. The Asian-born population has grown dramatically since 1970, when it comprised only nine percent of the nation's foreign-born population.
- The large increase in Asian immigration is largely a result of the 1965 Immigration Act, which eliminated the national origin quotas that served to restrict Asian immigration in favor of Europeans. Close ties between the U.S.

and the Philippines and U.S. military involvement in Vietnam and Korea also contributed to the rapid rise in Asian immigrants.

- Most of the Asian-born population came to the U.S. relatively recently: 41.4 percent entered the U.S. between 1990 and 2000, 35 percent in the 1980s, 17 percent in the 1970s, and 6 percent in the 1960s. As of 1997, however, 41 percent of the Asian-born population had been naturalized as U.S. citizens. Only those born in Europe had a higher rate of naturalization.



- In 1997, the five largest contributors to the nation's Asian-born population were China, India, Korea, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The numbers of people immigrating from these countries rose significantly from 1990 to 1997, with the exception of Korea, which showed little change.
- Asian-born people compare favorably with other foreign-born and native populations with regard to household income, poverty, health insurance, education, and homeownership. Their high income levels appear to reflect at least two factors: a relatively high proportion of workers in managerial and professional specialty jobs and a relatively low proportion of householders aged 65 and older.

Geographic Distribution

- More than half of the Asian/Pacific Islander population lives in the western United States. California has the largest number of residents who consider themselves Asian alone or in combination with another race: approximately 4.2 million, or 12 percent of the state's population. New York follows with 1.2 million. Most Americans who consider themselves Asian alone or in combination with another race are concentrated in four major cities: New York City, Los Angeles, San Jose, California, and Honolulu.
- Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese Americans tend to cluster geographically in California and New York. The Asian Indian and Korean populations are somewhat less concentrated, although large populations have emerged in a handful of states, including Illinois, New Jersey, and Texas, as well as California and New York. Southeast Asians have a different pattern because of federal resettlement schemes that created pockets of Southeast Asian refugees in a few states.

- Hawaii is the only state where a minority population outnumbers the white population; 58 percent of Hawaiians are Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Households and Family

- There were 2.5 million Asian/Pacific Islander families in 2000. About 80 percent of family households were maintained by married couples, 13 percent by women with no spouse present, and 7 percent by men with no spouse present. The percentage of households maintained by Asian/Pacific Islander males is higher than the white, non-Hispanic percentage (4.6 percent) and the total U.S. percentage (5.5 percent).
- In 2000, 53 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander households owned their own homes, and 23 percent of the households maintained by married couples had five or more members. Compared to the white, non-Hispanic population, Asians/Pacific Islanders had a lower percentage of divorced persons, 4.3 percent versus 9.6 percent.
- A nationwide survey found that Asian/Pacific Islander families provided more care than other groups for their older relatives. Forty-two percent of Asian Americans surveyed helped care for or provided financial support for their parents, compared to 34 percent of Hispanics, 28 percent of black Americans, and 19 percent of white Americans.

Education

- Eighty-six percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders were high school graduates in 2000. Nearly eighty percent of 1999 Asian/Pacific Islander high school graduates went directly to college, the highest proportion of any racial group.
- While 26 percent of the total U.S. population 25 years and over in 2000 had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, 44 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders were in this category. One million Asians/Pacific Islanders had an advanced degree (e.g., master's, Ph.D., M.D. or J.D.), a ratio of one in every seven persons.

Employment & Income

- The median income of Asian/Pacific Islander households for 1999 reached an all-time high of \$51,205, higher than any other racial group. In the same year, 33 percent of API households had yearly incomes of \$75,000 or more, and the poverty rate fell to a record low of 10.7 percent.
- Asians/Pacific Islanders had a higher rate of employed persons in managerial and professional specialty positions than the total population, nearly 40 percent compared to 30 percent. Additionally, only 3.9 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders were unemployed in 1999, compared to the national total of 4.4 percent.

Health

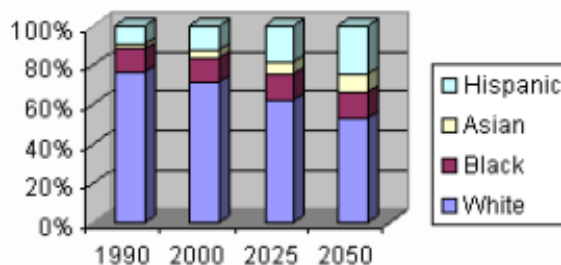
- The total fertility rate for Asian/Pacific Islander women was 1.93 in 1999, lower than the rate for any other racial or ethnic group. At 22.3 births per 1,000 women, the birth rate for Asians/Pacific Islanders aged 15-19 is lower than for any other race category or ethnicity. The total U.S. teen birthrate, 49.6, is more than double that of Asians/Pacific Islanders.
- The death rate for Asians in 1998 was 265 deaths per 100,000 people, the lowest of any racial or ethnic group. Hispanics were close behind with 343 deaths per 100,000 people. One factor contributing to the good health of both

Asians and Hispanics in the U.S. is the "immigrant advantage": several studies have shown that international migrants tend to be particularly healthy and optimistic individuals, with better diets and more positive health-related behaviors than non-immigrants. Both the Asian and the Hispanic populations include a higher proportion of recent immigrants than do either the white non-Hispanic population or the black non-Hispanic population.

- Another factor contributing to the good health of Asians/Pacific Islanders is age. In 2000, 93 percent of this population were younger than 65, and 86 percent were younger than 55. In comparison, only 88 percent of the total U.S. population were younger than 65 years and 80 percent were younger than 55.

Looking to the Future

Percent of U.S. Population By Racial/Ethnic Group and Year



- According to Census projections, Asians/Pacific Islanders will account for 6.5 percent of the nation's population by the year 2025, and by 2050 they will account for 9.3 percent. Consequently, by 2050 about one of every 10 Americans will have Asian/Pacific Islander roots.
- Although Asians/Pacific Islanders remain a relatively small proportion of the U.S. population, they have become increasingly politically active. Because of their small numbers, Asian Americans must gain the support of other racial and ethnic groups to win elected office. Political analysts have noted that coalitions among minority voters can sway an election even when the size of a specific population is relatively small.

This executive summary was prepared by Mary C. Dickson of the Population Resource Center in December 2001 and reviewed by Elise Jones, Demographer. Sources include various publications from the U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Census and Current Population Survey, March 2000; CDC National Vital Statistics Reports; Population Reference Bureau; Urban Institute; and the *New York Times*. For more information or specific citations, please contact PRC at (202) 467-5030, prc@prcdc.org, 1725 K Street NW, Suite 1102, Washington DC 20006; or visit our website at www.prcdc.org.